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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE FOREIGN MINISTER: "WE'RE ON THE SAME
PAGE" ON BURMA

REF: A. STATE 137644
[1](#)B. MANILA 3299
[1](#)C. MANILA 3268
[1](#)D. MANILA 3263

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Philippine Foreign Secretary Romulo, traveling with Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in India, personally assured the Ambassador that the Philippine government shares the views of the U.S. regarding violent repression in Burma, and will use the trip to press India for greater engagement on Burma. The Burma crisis continues to maintain a high profile in Philippine media; editorials in leading dailies have included calls for increased action on the part of Burma's trading partners, and the expulsion of Burma from ASEAN. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Following on earlier conversations with Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo regarding the crisis in Burma, the Ambassador spoke October 5 via telephone with Romulo, now traveling in India with President Arroyo. The Ambassador thanked Romulo for the Philippine government's proactive stance on Burma, and urged him to use the visit to India to underscore shared Philippine-U.S. views on the crisis and the need for increased Indian involvement. Romulo responded that such was their intention, and he went on to relate that Indian media implied that India might respond to the release of jailed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi with offers of aid. Romulo outlined strong Philippine support for UNSC action on Burma, and their hope for a strong presidential statement calling for Suu Kyi's release, respect for human rights, and moves toward democratization. He concluded by saying, "We are on exactly the same page and the same line on Burma."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Events in Burma continue to command widespread attention in the Philippine media. An October 4 editorial in the top-circulation Philippine Daily Inquirer averred that the situation had worsened, and that only expulsion from ASEAN and pressure from key trading partners such as China would influence the Burmese junta to moderate its draconian tactics against dissidents. Writing in another leading daily, the Philippine Star, columnist Alex Magno decried the Burmese regime's lack of respect for the views of the international community, and said that in the absence of governments following through on rhetoric with action, the burden for advocacy for the Burmese people would fall on global civil society. The Inquirer's October 5 front page outlined how the regime has ignored UN calls for restraint in broadening its roundup and detention of activists.
KENNEY